

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
11 WASHINGTON STREET CUMBERLAND, MD 21502



SERVICE FOR THE LORD'S DAY
FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT: PONDER- HOPE
NOVEMBER 30, 2025 11:00 AM

GATHERING

OPENING VOLUNTARY

O COME, O COME EMMANUEL
JUDITH BROWN, PIANO

ARR. JEAN HILBERT

11:00 AM

CHIMING OF THE HOUR

WELCOME & ANNOUNCEMENTS

CHORAL INTROIT

TO A MAIDEN WHOSE NAME WAS MARY
THE SANCTUARY CHOIR

"ANNUNCIATION"

To a maid whose name was Mary, the angel Gabriel came;
"Fear not," the angel told her. "I come to bring good news;
Good news I come to tell us, good news, I say, good news."

"For you are highly favored by God the Lord of all,
Who even now is with you. You are on earth most blest;
You are most blest, most blessed, God chose you, you are blest!"

"Fear not, for God is with you, and you shall bear a child.
His name shall be called Jesus, God's offspring from on high.
And he shall reign forever, forever reign on high."

As Mary heard the angel, she wondered at his words.
"Behold, I am your handmaid," she said unto her God.
"So be it; I am ready according to your word."

* CALL TO WORSHIP & PRAYER FOR THE DAY

ALLIE BLANK AND AURORA CLARK

The days are coming—when we will walk in God's light!

We come, carrying our hopes and our worries.

The light of Christ calls us to wake up and prepare.

We are ready to begin the journey to Bethlehem. Come, let us walk in the light of the Lord!

Let us pray...

God of beginnings, you call us out of darkness and into your marvelous light. Wake us from our sleep and open our eyes to the hope you plant in our hearts. As we hang the greens and set this space apart for your glory, let the beauty of this season draw us closer to you. Amen.

LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT CANDLE: HOPE

* HYMN #82

COME, THOU LONG-EXPECTED JESUS

"HYFRYDOL"

CALL TO CONFESSION

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

God of promise, we confess that we grow weary in the waiting. We cling to control instead of trusting your timing. We forget to watch for the light breaking through. Forgive us, O God, and awaken us again to your hope. Teach us to live as people of promise and peace. Amen.

(Silence for personal prayer and reflection.)

RESPONSE #88

O COME, O COME, EMMANUEL (Verse 2)

“VENI EMMANUEL”

O come, thou Wisdom from on high, who orderest all things mightily: to us the path of knowledge show;
and teach us in her ways to go. Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.

ASSURANCE OF PARDON

PASSING OF THE PEACE AND CELEBRATING OUR COMMUNITY

Please stand and greet those in the pews near you. Send a wave to the camera for those joining online.

We recognize how important we are to each other; we belong to each other and are stronger together.

THE WORD

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

FIRST READING

PSALM 122:1-9

¹ I was glad when they said to me, “Let us go to the house of the Lord!”

² Our feet are standing within your gates, O Jerusalem.

³ Jerusalem—built as a city that is bound firmly together.

⁴ To it the tribes go up, the tribes of the Lord, as was decreed for Israel, to give thanks to the name of the Lord.

⁵ For there the thrones for judgment were set up, the thrones of the house of David.

⁶ Pray for the peace of Jerusalem: “May they prosper who love you.

⁷ Peace be within your walls and security within your towers.”

⁸ For the sake of my relatives and friends I will say, “Peace be within you.”

⁹ For the sake of the house of the Lord our God, I will seek your good.

ANTHEM

NOW THE HEAVENS START TO WHISPER

“JEFFERSON”

THE SANCTUARY CHOIR

Now the heavens start to whisper, as the veil is growing thin.
Earth from slumber wakes to listen to the stirring, faint within;
Seed of promise deeply planted, child to spring from Jesse’s stem!
Like the soil beneath the frostline, hearts grow soft to welcome him.

Heavy clouds that block the moonlight now begin to drift away.
Diamond brilliance through the darkness shines the hope of coming day.
Christ, the morning star of splendor gleams within a world grown dim.
Heaven’s ember fans to fullness; hearts grown warm to welcome him.

Christ, eternal Sun of justice, Christ, the rose of wisdom’s seed,
Come to bless with fire and fragrance hours of yearning, hurt and need.
In the lonely in the stranger, in the outcast, hid from view:
Child who comes to grace the manger, teach our hearts to welcome you.

SECOND READING

ISAIAH 2:1-5

The word that Isaiah son of Amoz saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem.

² In days to come the mountain of the Lord’s house shall be established as the highest of the mountains
and shall be raised above the hills all the nations shall stream to it.

³ Many peoples shall come and say, “Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob,
that he may teach us his ways and that we may walk in his paths.” For out of Zion shall go forth instruction
and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. ⁴ He shall judge between the nations and shall arbitrate for many peoples; they
shall beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against
nation; neither shall they learn war any more. ⁵ O house of Jacob, come, let us walk in the light of the Lord!

SERMON

“PONDER: HOPE”

REV. ALISON PETERS

* HYMN #88

O COME, O COME, EMMANUEL (Verse 1, 4, 5, 6, 7)

"VENI EMMANUEL"

1 O come, O come, Emmanuel, and ransom captive Israel,
that mourns in lonely exile here until the Son of God appear.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.

4 O come, thou Root of Jesse, free thine own from Satan's tyranny;
From depths of hell thy people save and give them victory o'er the grave.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.

5 O come, thou Key of David, come, and open wide our heavenly home;
make safe the way that leads on high, and close the path to misery.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.

6 O come, thou Dayspring, come and cheer our spirits by thine advent here;
disperse the gloomy clouds of night, and death's dark shadows put to flight.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.

7 O come, Desire of nations, bind all peoples in one heart and mind;
bid envy, strife, and discord cease; fill the whole world with heaven's peace.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.

RESPONDING TO THE WORD

INVITATION TO OFFERING

(Please place all tithes and offerings as well as any orange prayer request cards in the offering plate.)

OFFERTORY SOLO

COME, THOU LONG EXPECTED JESUS
JUDITH BROWN, PIANO

ARR. DAVID NEVUE
ARR. MARK HAYES

* DOXOLOGY #749

COME! LIVE IN THE LIGHT!

"WE ARE CALLED"

Come! Live in the light! Shine with the joy and the love of the Lord!

We are called to be light for the kingdom, to live in the freedom of the city of God. We are called to act with justice;
we are called to love tenderly; we are called to serve one another, to walk humbly with God.

* PRAYER OF DEDICATION

PRAYER OF THE PEOPLE CONCLUDING WITH THE LORD'S PRAYER- Ecumenical Version

(You are welcome to pray the Lord's Prayer with the version most familiar to you.)

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven.

Give us today our daily bread.

Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us.

Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil.

For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours now and forever. Amen.

* HYMN #100

MY SOUL CRIES OUT WITH A JOYFUL SHOUT

"STAR OF THE COUNTY DOWN"

* RESPONSIVE BENEDICTION-HANGING OF THE GREENS

As we hang wreaths, trim trees, and light candles, we prepare this space for the coming of Christ.

May every decoration remind us of hope fulfilled in Jesus.

As we hang the greens, we celebrate life that endures.

May this space reflect your eternal light and love.

Come, Lord Jesus—fill our hearts and this house with your presence. Amen.



May the God of hope go with us ev - ery day, fill - ing all our
lives with love and joy and peace. May the God of jus - tice speed us
on our way, bring - ing light and hope to ev - ery land and race.
Pray - ing, let us work for peace; sing - ing, share our joy with all;
work - ing for a world that's new, faith - ful when we hear Christ's call.

POSTLUDE

LO, HE COMES WITH CLOUDS DESCENDING
JUDITH BROWN, PIANO

"HELMSLEY"

* When this symbol precedes an element of the service, if you are able, please stand.
Please join in reading or singing those parts of the service printed in **bold**.

This Morning's Worship Leaders

Preacher.....	Rev. Alison Peters
Liturgist.....	David Stickler
Advent Candlelighters.....	Allie Blank and Aurora Clark
Director of Music Ministries/Organist/Pianist.....	Judith Brown
Musician.....	The Sanctuary Choir
Audio/Video Technicians.....	Joe Aurigemma and Eric Ringler
Ushers.....	Kathy Dowell and Linda Mellon
Nursery.....	Michael and Cathy Levitas

HANGING OF THE GREENS: Join us after worship for our "Hanging of the Greens" event. Lunch will be provided and we will begin an ongoing intergenerational project. Young Disciples will begin their advent project, *Ponder Your Hearts*, following lunch in the childcare room. All ages are welcome to participate in the decorating of the church. Join us for an afternoon of Christmas cheer designed to prepare us for the birth of Christ.



WELCOME: A very warm welcome to everyone who comes to worship with us here at First Presbyterian Church! We are proud to be a "Big Tent Church" where everyone is welcome to join us in worshiping and serving our Lord, Jesus Christ. We welcome and encourage worshipers of all races, all women, men, and members of the LGBTQ+ community, all political parties, and all walks of life to join us. We welcome you to worship with us.

WELCOME VISITORS: We are glad you found your way to First Presbyterian Church of Cumberland. For more information about opportunities to worship, learn and serve with us, we encourage you to visit the table outside the church office. You can also learn more about us at www.fpc-cumberland.org and www.facebook.com/First.Pres.Cumberland.

FRIENDSHIP PADS: Please locate and sign the red pad in your pew, tear off the sheet and place it in the collection plate during the offering. This important practice allows us to be mindful of new folks and long-time members as well, and is a good way to learn (or remember) the names of those with whom you are seated. **If you are visitor, please fill out the "Welcome to First Presbyterian Church" card in the pew rack and put it in the offering plate when it comes by during the service.**

PERSONAL LISTENING DEVICES: (amplifiers) are available in the back of the church for use during worship. Please see an usher for assistance.

SHARING OF JOYS & CONCERNS: Please use the orange prayer request cards, which are located in the back of the sanctuary by the bulletins to share any joys or concerns. Place the card in the offering plate once you have completed your request. The ushers will bring them to the pastor during the offering. The orange prayer request cards are also available in the pew racks.



CHILDREN IN WORSHIP: You are welcome to bring your child with you to worship. We have "worship bags" in the back of the sanctuary that include materials for drawing and coloring, as well as Bible stories and Bible word-find games. Our "To Families with Young Children" pew card contains information about why young children should be encouraged to come to worship and how parents and others can engage them more fully in worship.

Childcare is provided during worship as needed! Please see an usher if you have any questions.

THE PRAY-GROUND is a special space in the sanctuary for our youngest children and their families. All families are welcome to come and sit in the right front pews with their children seated on the rug. This front row seat will allow God's youngest children to participate in the service in a place where they can see and hear best. There will be activities provided so that their little hands are kept busy while participating in worship. "Jesus said to them, 'Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. Truly I tell you, anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it'" (Mark 10:14-15).

SANCTUARY FLOWERS: Please contact Michael Levitas or the church office if you would like to sponsor flowers for a special occasion such as a birthday or anniversary or in memory or honor of a friend or loved one. You may specify live or silk flowers.



The flowers in the sanctuary this morning are given to the glory of God in honor of the birthday of their mother and grandmother, Carlotta Shaffer, by Christine, Brenda, Gary and her great grandsons.



MONDAY, DECEMBER (1)

7:30 AM CHURCH OFFICE OPEN
12:15 PM RED CROSS BLOOD DRIVE
7:00 PM CHORAL SOCIETY REHEARSAL

TUESDAY, DECEMBER R (2)

7:30 AM CHURCH OFFICE OPEN
5:00 PM MISSION MEETING
7:00 PM BUILDING & GROUNDS MEETINGS

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER (3)

7:30 AM CHURCH OFFICE OPEN
12:15 PM STAFF MEETING
5:30 PM WORSHIP & MUSIC MEETING
6:30 PM JOYBELL REHEARSAL
7:00 PM NA MEETING

THURSDAY, DECEMBER (4)

7:30 AM CHURCH OFFICE OPEN
2:00 PM FAITH ACTION NETWORK MEETING
6:30 PM CHORAL SOCIETY REHEARSAL

FRIDAY, DECEMBER (5)

7:30 AM CHURCH OFFICE OPEN
7:30 PM CHORAL SOCIETY CONCERT

SATURDAY, DECEMBER (6)

SUNDAY, DECEMBER (7)

9:45 AM ADULT SUNDAY SCHOOL
11:00 AM SERVICE OF WORD & SACRAMENT:
HOLY COMMUNION
SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT:
PONDER: PEACE
4:00 PM CHORAL SOCIETY CONCERT

**PASTOR'S
SCHEDULE**

Pastor Alison is available when requested or informed of a need. If you are aware of someone in need of a visit or phone call, please call or text her to let her know. *[Fridays are generally her day off and she will respond when she is available.]*

**Ways to contact Pastor Alison: 814-715-
1681/revalisonpeters@gmail.com**

**To help with scheduling,
please reach out to the Church Office:
301-777-3700/ firstpresbyteriansecretary@gmail.com**

ADMINISTRATION & FINANCE

RULING ELDERS: CARL BELT & CINDY CORLEY

ANNUAL GIVING YEAR-TO-DATE: as of November 23, 2025

Total 2025 Pledges Promised	\$237,796.00
Pre-paid pledges	\$ 48,578.00
2025 Pledge Balance Promised	\$189,217.00
Pledge Balance Received Year-to-Date	\$ 168,396.00
Pledge Balance Promised Year-to-Date	\$ 171,565.00
Over/(Under)	\$ (3,169.00)

ONLINE GIVING





JOIN US FOR ADVENT AND CHRISTMAS!



SECOND SUNDAY SOCIAL-COOKIE CHRISTMAS: Join us after worship on **Sunday, December 14th** in the Gathering Place for fellowship and cookie decorating. Please bring a few dozen of your favorite cookies to exchange with others, Undecorated sugar cookies will be

provided for decorating. **To sign-up, please contact Kelsey Gallo or firstpresbyterianevents@gmail.com.**

BLUE CHRISTMAS SERVICE: For many people, Christmas is a time of loneliness, sorrow, and sadness. This service offers a way for people to deal with those feelings and still feel surrounded by the love of God. **Join us on Wednesday, December 17th at 6:00 PM for a time of prayer, reflective music and candle lighting as we claim the promise of our faith this season.**



CHRISTMAS JOY OFFERING: On **December 21st**, our congregation will give to the Christmas Joy Offering. This has been a Presbyterian tradition since the 1930s.

The Offering distributes gifts equally to the Assistance Program of the Board of Pensions and to Presbyterian-related schools and colleges equipping communities of color.

Funded by gifts, legacies, endowment income, and half the Christmas Joy Offering, the Assistance Program provides critical financial assistance to eligible church workers and their families with urgent financial needs, as well as income and housing supplements for retired church workers and their families. It also sponsors grants for vocational training of clergy. Supporting our clergy and other career church workers in their retirement years provides them a needed benefit and is one way we can give thanks for their devotion to the church. Please consider giving generously to this special offering.

CHRISTMAS EVE CANDLELIGHT & COMMUNION SERVICE: Join us at 7:30 PM for a Christmas Prelude followed by our Christmas Eve Service at 8:00 PM. We will celebrate the birth of Christ with a traditional Christmas Eve service that includes communion, candle lighting and Christmas music.

YEAR-END GIVING: Thank you for your faithful support of the mission and ministry of First Presbyterian Church during 2025. Remember that year-end contributions must be received by the church no later than **Tuesday, December 30th** in order to qualify as 2025 contributions for tax purposes.



MARK YOUR CALENDARS! Join the Cumberland Choral Society on **FRIDAY, DECEMBER 5th at 7:30 PM OR SUNDAY, DECEMBER 7th at 4:00 PM** here at FPC!

The **CUMBERLAND CHORAL SOCIETY** will be presenting its winter concerts during the first weekend of December and we hope you will be able to attend one of them. We will be presenting the 18th century holiday favorite "Gloria" by Antonio Vivaldi and a selection of five pieces from our world today which will comprise a 21st century "Gloria." Composers such as Dan Forrest, Kyle Pederson and Leonard Cohen will be featured. The concert will feature professional musicians, both instrumentalists and vocal soloists, as well as choral society members. Come one, come all!

Tuesday, December 23, 2025-
Brittany in the office until noon
Zach in the office until 2:00 PM

Wednesday, December 24, 2025-
Brittany out of the office
Zach in the office until noon

Thursday, December 25, 2025- CLOSED

Friday, December 26, 2025- CLOSED

Monday, December 29, 2025-
Brittany works from home
Zach in the office until 2:00PM

Tuesday, December 30, 2025-
Brittany in office until noon
Zach in the office until 2:00PM

Wednesday, December 31, 2025-
Brittany out of the office
Zach in the office until noon

Thursday, January 1, 2026- CLOSED

Friday, January 2, 2026-
Brittany in the office until noon
Zach in the office until 2:00 PM

Sunday School — The Pastor and the Co-chairs of the Faith Formation and Building & Grounds committees will consult by phone and make a decision by 8:00 AM. If Sunday School is canceled, announcements will be made by e-mail to church members, on Facebook, and on the church website.

Worship — Worship will be canceled only in the most extreme weather conditions. If indicated, the Pastor and the Co-chairs of the Worship & Music and Building & Grounds committees will consult and make a decision. If worship is canceled, announcements will be made by e-mail to church members, on Facebook, and on the church website.



Christmas Poinsettias 2025

If you wish to dedicate a Christmas poinsettia, please complete the tear-off sheet below and place it in the offering plate, or return it to the church office Sunday, December 7th.

Poinsettias will be displayed in the sanctuary at the Christmas Eve service. If you would like to take your poinsettia home, please do so after the service. If you do not wish to keep your poinsettia, please indicate below. Additional donations may also be made toward the Christmas flowers.

Please print names exactly as you wish them to appear in the bulletin and attach a check for \$7.50 for each poinsettia, marking "CHRISTMAS POINSETTIA" in the memo line.

Number of poinsettias: _____ at \$7.50 each Total \$ _____

I will pick up my poinsettia: ☐ I wish to donate my poinsettia: ☐

Additional Contribution for Christmas flowers: \$ _____ Total \$ _____

To the Glory of God in **Memory** or **Honor** of: (Please circle one) _____

By: _____

Please return your order no later than Sunday, December 7th.

Christmas Music Offering 2025



If you wish to dedicate Christmas Music in honor or memory of a loved one, please complete the tear-off sheet and place it in the offering plate, or return it to the church office.

Please print all the names exactly as you would like them to appear in the bulletin and attach a check with "Christmas Music 2025" in the memo line. Proceeds from the Christmas Music Offering will be used to help defray the costs of seasonal guest musicians. **Please submit this offering and dedication no later than Sunday, December 14th.**

NAME: _____ PHONE: _____

TOTAL GIFT: \$ _____

To the Glory of God in **Memory** or **Honor** of: (Please circle one) _____



REASON FOR THE SEASON GIVING FORM – 2025

JUST BE. . .a LIFE SAVER!

NAME: _____ PHONE: _____

Please make your total amount payable to “First Presbyterian Church”, and marked “Reason for the Season”.

Reason for the Season can add another “Just Be. . .” to the Stewardship’s list: “BE LIFE SAVING”. That’s the purpose of Reason for the Season. . .the extra-giving, alternative Christmas gift-giving opportunity that provides the means for various organizations to improve or even save lives. If saving a life seems overwhelming, consider what these groups are doing:

FAMILY CRISIS RESOURCE CENTER

\$ _____

Family Crisis Resource Center has a mission to assist victims and survivors of intimate partner violence, sexual assault, child abuse, and stalking, and to prevent these crimes from occurring in our community through counseling, support, perpetrator intervention and adolescent prevention. The long-term vision is of living safely in a community where abuse and sexual violence are extremely rare.

JANE’S PLACE

\$ _____

Jane’s Place is a safe, child-friendly advocacy center for kids suspected of having suffered abuse, neglect, or sexual assault. It provides a space for them to heal, as well as one location for professionals from different fields to investigate, share information, prosecute, develop effective, coordinated strategies for each unique case and child, and to provide services to help the child and their family heal from the trauma of abuse.

WESTERN MARYLAND FOOD BANK

\$ _____

Western Maryland Food Bank was established in July 1983 to help bring additional food into the tri-state area. Since then, it has worked to enhance local food rescue and food distribution systems, addressing the invisible hunger in our community. Currently WMFB provides support to over 100 agencies serving 10,000-13,000 individuals monthly. Millions of pounds of foods have been distributed to individuals in our area. How many lives saved does that equal?

PRESBYTERIAN EDUCATION BOARD SCHOLARSHIPS, PAKISTAN,

\$ _____

Presbyterian Education Board Scholarships enable the “poorest of the poor” (Christians) and Muslims, together, to get a quality education that can save them from a life of poverty. They in turn can help others as a teacher, medical worker, engineer, etc. instead of being a bonded worker in a brick factory. We are currently ensuring 7 students get a quality education in Kinnard Academy in Lahore.

MINORITY FOCUS- DR. DICK HARDING CHARITY FUND FOR NEPAL

\$ _____

Dr. Harding Charity Fund for Nepal has been assisting disadvantaged, deserving Nepali students attain higher education for over 3 decades. Karuna Sarki, currently a Christian Nepali medical student in her 3rd year of study, is a female from the Dalit (“outcaste”) caste. She has 2 more years of study ahead. Without financial help, Karuna could not get the medical knowledge needed to save many lives where such help is very scarce.

CHURCH PARTNERSHIP CONFERENCE

\$ _____

Church Partnership Conference will be held in Pittsburgh, May 3-7, 2026. At this triennial meeting of Czech ECCB and PCUSA churches, partnerships will be strengthened through worship, music, speakers, partner conversations, discussions, and field trips. Three members of our partner church in Vsetín will be coming. Funds are needed to help with their travel expenses. Members of our church are encouraged to attend also!

OTHER MISSIONS

\$ _____

Other Missions that work at saving or improving lives in various ways: “This Child Here” (Ukraine); **Mulanji Hospital** (Malawi); **Grand ‘Anse** (Haiti); **PEB school construction** (Pakistan); **Community Café**; **Disaster Relief Fund**; **Special Ministries**; **Interfaith Food Pantry**; **Dakota Learning Camp**; etc. Put this form in the offering plate, the office, or give online.

TOTAL \$ _____

How appropriate, that we can be **life savers**, during this season when we celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ, our **life’s Savior**!